

anabolic steroids

Winning and power still remain two of the most cherished values in our society. Most people want to be winners, and many want to gain power. Children pick up on these values at an early age and try to emulate them throughout their lives. Some are successful on their own, while others seek artificial means to help them along, thus creating an unlevel playing field. In the case of sports, use of anabolic steroids is one means.

DEPOSITORY

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What are anabolic steroids?

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Anabolic steroids are a group of powerful compounds closely related to the male sex hormone, testosterone. They are used to promote the growth of muscle bulk, strength, and stamina.

FACT IS... Limited to the treatment of certain kinds of anemia, severe burns, and some types of breast cancer, anabolic steroids are seldomly prescribed by physicians today.

Why are anabolic steroids used?

Some athletes use steroids to gain a competitive edge by increasing body weight and muscular strength. Other individuals who are concerned about their physical appearance use steroids to look more muscular.

FACT IS... About 3 percent of 12th grade males in the United States had used steroids, according to a 1990 National Institute on Drug Abuse survey.

Are there any physical side effects?

Yes. Anabolic steroid usage can result in more than 70 side effects ranging in severity from acne to liver cancer and including psychological as well as physical reactions. The liver and cardiovascular and reproductive systems are most seriously affected by steroid use.

FACT IS... In males, use can cause withered testicles, sterility, and impotence. In females, irreversible masculine traits (such as lowered voice and increased facial and body hair) can develop along with breast reduction and sterility. Psychological effects in both sexes include very aggressive behavior known as "roid rage" and depression. While some side effects appear quickly, others, such as heart attacks and strokes, may not show up for years.

Are the risks worth it?

Review the facts. The extreme effects of anabolic steroid use can result in either death or doing time.

THE LAW

Are there legal consequences for anabolic steroid usage?

Yes. In terms of ranking illegal narcotics, the federal government lists steroids as a Schedule 3 drug, as is codeine. Ranked as more serious controlled substances are heroin and LSD (Schedule 1), and morphine and cocaine (Schedule 2).

FACT IS... In February 1991, the federal Anabolic Steroids Control Act became effective. It empowered the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration to regulate and investigate legal and illicit steroid use and trafficking. Illinois law also provides penalties for the possession and manufacture of steroids.

CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES

- Under federal law, a first-time conviction for the manufacture or delivery of steroids carries a maximum punishment of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.
- A steroid possession conviction, even for personal-use quantities not validly prescribed by a doctor, carries a maximum sentence of one year in prison and a minimum \$1,000 fine. Subsequent offenses within two years of a prior conviction will result in stiffer penalties.

For more information on the legal consequences of drug abuse, call the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority at (312) 793-8550.



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